

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 296

By Montgomery

A RESOLUTION to honor and congratulate the ministers and congregation of The Gathering upon the official groundbreaking of their new church campus.

WHEREAS, the churches of our nation have been an integral part of our history as a people and have had an unparalleled impact in forming and maintaining a stable and just society; and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that the members of this legislative body should recognize those religious institutions and their congregations who, through their unflagging capacity for love, dedication of spirit, and faith in God, strive to enrich the lives of people in their communities; one such estimable institution, shining as a ray of hope in the Sevier County community, is The Gathering; and

WHEREAS, the good people of The Gathering comprise one such laudable congregation who will celebrate the church's official campus groundbreaking on March 29, 2007; and

WHEREAS, the celebration will be a time of reflecting on the past, giving thanks for the present, and joyfully looking forward to a future filled with spiritual enrichment; and

WHEREAS, The Gathering was born on August 20, 2000, with just two families committed to helping Pastor Gene Wolfenbarger plant a new life-changing church; during the last six years, the members of The Gathering have met in five different locations as the growing congregation searched for a permanent home; and

WHEREAS, since moving to its current temporary location, a renovated fitness center building, The Gathering's congregation has grown in attendance from 150 to 800 members each week, with 1,166 congregants in attendance at the church campus last Easter; and

WHEREAS, with the swelling of the congregation came also an increase in church staff; what started out as a pastor and a part-time secretary/worship leader has blossomed into a fully staffed organization with five ordained pastors, eleven full time employees, and three part-time employees who together oversee an annual budget of more than one million dollars; and

WHEREAS, The Gathering's new church campus, with estimated costs of the project between nine and eleven million dollars, consists of forty-three acres located off the new Veterans Boulevard which winds through Sevierville into the heart of Pigeon Forge; the church building, at 40,000 square feet, includes an auditorium which seats more than 1,000 people and state-of-the-art facilities for children; and

WHEREAS, The Gathering, under the able guidance of its admirable ministry and dedicated congregants, is committed to serving its community; and

WHEREAS, the church's members are also devoted to sharing the joy and peace that can only be found within a personal relationship with God; and

WHEREAS, with its modest beginnings, and its grand vision, The Gathering has earned the noble distinction of being an outstanding religious institution and catalyst for positive spiritual change, and the members of this exceptional congregation should be appropriately honored for their exemplary service to their fellow Christians and to the good people of Sevierville and Tennessee; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we join in celebrating the groundbreaking of The Gathering's new church campus, thank the good people of this congregation and their ministers for their notable service to their Lord and the State of Tennessee, and wish them much continued success and happiness.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.